

The Salisbury Planning Board held its regular meeting Tuesday, January 23, 2007, in the City Council Chamber of the Salisbury City Hall located at 217 S. Main Street at 4 p.m. with the following being present and absent:

PRESENT: Dr. Mark Beymer, Robert Cockerl, Tommy Hairston, Lou Manning, Brian Miller, Sandy Reitz, Valarie Stewart, Albert Stout, Dr. Kelly Vance, Price Wagoner, and Diane Young

ABSENT: Nathan Chambers

STAFF: Janet Gapen, Preston Mitchell, Diana Moghrabi, Joe Morris

Chairman Brian Miller called the meeting to order and offered the invocation. The minutes of the January 9, 2007, meeting were approved as published. The Planning Board adopted the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Adoption of the 2007-2008 Planning Board Goals

Staff Report

The goal cycle is actually the fiscal year, which begins July 1; however, preparations are made in January for the City Council Retreat that is scheduled for February 15 and 16, 2007. The 2006-2007 goals will continue through the remainder of this fiscal year and are listed below. Senior Planner Preston Mitchell presented the following report.

1. Review and provide to City Council a recommendation of approval on the proposed Land Development Ordinance.
2. Review and provide to City Council a recommendation of approval on the North Main Small Area Plan.
3. Complete the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan for City Council approval. (Completed)
4. Define the difference between Small Area Planning and Large-Scale Sub-area Land Use Planning, and establish policies for development of future Small Area Plans and Sub-area Plans.
5. Provide a prioritized list of at least two (2) Small Area Planning Areas and at least two (2) Sub-area Planning Areas to City Council.
6. As part of Sub-area Planning process, conduct a Planning Summit between the city, county, and local development community.

7. Conduct a minimum of three Board training exercises

The Land Development Ordinance Committee (LDOC) is expected to send the proposed new ordinance to Planning Board and City Council during the second quarter of 2007; this has been a tremendous undertaking.

Janet Gapen gave the Planning Board an update on the North Main Small Area Plan. There have been delays in pulling together the visual component of this plan. The help of a student was enlisted; early in the year there were scheduling conflicts, and staff had not been able to meet with him and share necessary information. Staff apologized for the delay and has also begun to work with a local architect who has taken all the feedback received from the residents of the neighborhood and has started to draft a plan-view drawing that will show a vision for the neighborhood. Staff will review the draft this week. Janet hopes that in early February they will have a neighborhood meeting and let residents view the results and offer comments. Planning Board will review the North Main Small Area Plan after that public input meeting.

Preston Mitchell suggested that if the North Main Small Area Plan is brought before Planning Board by the end of February, there will be no need to include it in the 2007-2008 Goals.

One very important event has been the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. When staff sought bicycle lanes on South Fulton Street in the fall of 2005, City Council believed it was crucial to have a comprehensive plan in place before randomly re-striping the streets as they are resurfaced. A grant was available from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, which required submittal of the application by the end of that year; the grant was awarded in May of 2006. This must be a goal for the upcoming year in order to fulfill grant requirements. A consultant has been hired and a steering committee formed. In addition to the new Land Development Ordinance (LDO), this Bicycle Plan is a direct implementation of the Salisbury Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

The need for large-scale sub-area planning, corridor planning, and additional small area planning is very real and must be given high priority as we enter the upcoming surge of development. Many cities and counties throughout the nation are recognizing a fearful loss of industrial land due to cumulative codes permitting non-industrial uses within industrial zoning districts. The new Land Development Ordinance proposes to shift the catch-all district (M-1) to the Corridor Mixed-Use (CMX) district where office, commercial, and residential can coexist along major roadways. There are huge swaths of current M-1 zoning that are carefully being considered for conversion to light industrial, highway-oriented commercial, or corridor mixed-use as part of the Land Development Ordinance zoning map conversion. Following completion of the Land Development Ordinance, the Planning Board and City Council must then concentrate on mapping and fine-tuning the Salisbury Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan policies for the protection of industrial land. It will be important to coordinate with Rowan County's Economic Development Commission (EDC) on these efforts.

Second to sub-area planning for industrial development will be corridor planning for those areas that will become the new catch-all (cumulative) areas under the new ordinance. One area in particular is the Highway 70 / Statesville Boulevard corridor where interest in developing a plan was revived this past year at both the Planning Board and City Council levels.

Staff recommends that the Planning Board take the initiative to propose a possible restructuring of the Planning Board to a 9-member board. Staff has carefully considered this proposal based on research and advisement from Centralina Council of Governments and the University Of North Carolina Institute Of Government. Both Centralina and the Institute believe that a 7 to 9-member board is an adequate size to properly conduct business and make solid recommendations to City Council. There is no direct correlation between the amount of work there is to do, how busy the board is, and the number of serving members. In addition, the strain on City Council to find 12 members who are able (with everyone's busy personal lives) to serve a 3-year term is becoming more and more difficult each year. Preston Mitchell prepared a memo with the history of the Salisbury Planning Board.

Rowan County has been entertaining the idea of reducing the number of members on their Planning Board, too, but that is not related to this discussion.

Having researched the number of Planning Board members in several other North Carolina cities, staff discovered the following:

- Concord: 9
- Greensboro: 9
- Hickory 11
- High Point: 9
- Kannapolis: 9
- Lexington: 11
- Mooresville: 9
- Statesville: 8+1 non-voting = 9

Board Discussion

A quorum for a 9-member Planning Board would be five. (Simple majority) Mark Beymer acknowledged that a 12-member board is more difficult for staff; however, it is not easy to get a committee together if you do not have enough people on the board. Brian Miller suggested that fewer members may mean a higher level of commitment.

Diane Young asked what the process would be for the conversion from 12 to 9 members. The Institute recommends disbanding the Planning Board and starting over in one ordinance; they do not recommend "rolling off." Albert Stout said if the City Council created the Planning Board then they should be the ones to make the recommendation for change and not the Planning Board.

Sandy Reitz weighed in by saying this Planning Board is very committee oriented. She believes a higher level of commitment by a smaller board may result in more decisions being made during the board meetings; committees might not be as necessary under those circumstances as they are today. Valarie Stewart does not believe Planning Board is “broken” and the advantages for change are not clear. The public is well represented with this board and discussion is good. Be careful not to change the Planning Board to create a “like mind.” Kelly Vance has noticed that, with twelve people discussing things, it can get cumbersome; nine members may make discussion more efficient. Lou Manning thinks everything that could be said has been said. A fewer number of board members could be more efficient—nine would be better than twelve. Mark Beymer seconded Valarie Stewart’s comments. He pointed out that just because you have an odd number on the board it does not mean you are going to have an odd number in attendance; you could still end up with a tie vote.

Albert Stout received his agenda packet just prior to the meeting and did not have an opportunity to review this proposal to reduce the Planning Board from twelve to nine members. He has reservations about this and does not like to do things too hastily.

The Chair asked for a show of hands of who would like to see a 9-member board; Lou Manning, Sandy Reitz, and Kelly Vance raised their hands in favor. (3) No one raised their hand to oppose a 9-member board. The consensus was to consider the reconstruction of the Planning Board and to receive more information. (8) This will be assigned to Committee 3 (Diane Young, Mark Beymer, Tommy Hairston, and Nathan Chambers).

Board Goals for 2007-2008

1. Review and provide to City Council a recommendation of approval on the proposed Land Development Ordinance. Project completion within 60 days of receipt of the completed draft.
2. Review and provide to City Council a recommendation of approval on the North Main Small Area Plan. This may be completed before the end of the current year (Spring 2007).
3. Begin reconsideration of the Highway 70/Statesville Boulevard Corridor Plan (Start 3rd quarter 2007)
4. Review and provide a recommendation to City Council on the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. (4th quarter 2007)
5. Begin investigation of large-scale sub-area planning for industrial areas and industrial corridors. (Begin 1st quarter 2008)
6. Conduct a minimum of three Board training exercises year -round.

Mark Beymer made a MOTION to adopt the 2007-2008 Planning Board Goals as listed. Albert Stout seconded the motion with all members voting AYE.

COMMITTEES

A. Schedule

1. *Nominating Committee for Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Board*

Brian Miller and Lou Manning will not be eligible to serve the next Planning Board cycle due to term limits. The last day of the cycle is March 31.

Rules of Procedures Committee (Brian Miller, Lou Manning, Valarie Stewart, Diane Young, and Mark Beymer) will meet January 26, 2007, at 8 a.m. in the first floor conference room and come back to Planning Board with their recommendation for Chair and Vice Chair.

2. Committee 3 (Diane Young, Mark Beymer, Tommy Hairston, and Nathan Chambers) will meet Tuesday, January 30, at 8 a.m. in the first floor conference room to discuss the possible reconstruction of the Planning Board. (Compare and contrast the benefits of a 9 or 12-member Planning Board)

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

Brian Miller thanked the board for their participation in the discussion today.

Dr. Kelly Vance announced her resignation from the Planning Board, which is effective immediately. She has accepted a position in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Vance thanked the board for their “inexhaustible graciousness”, for the things she has learned while serving, and for the personal growth opportunity. She will miss both being a part of Salisbury and a part of this Planning Board. Members of the board echoed their appreciation of Dr. Vance, thanked her, and wished her well.

The next Planning Board meeting is February 13, 2007.

There being no further business to come before the Planning Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Brian Miller, Chairman

Lou Manning, Vice Chairman

Secretary, Diana Moghrabi